

CARACCAS.

(From "*Sketches of South-America*," just published.)

From the New Monthly Magazine.

THE following passage from the author's description of the former seat of government in Venezuela, may serve to give our readers a notion of that city :

"Caraccas, the metropolis of the province of Venezuela while under the Spanish yoke, was founded in 1566, by Diego de Losada : it is situated in the delicious valley of Arragon. Its elevation above the level of the sea is three thousand feet, according to the observations made by M. de Humboldt at the Trinity church. Although it is in $10^{\circ} 30'$ of latitude, and 67° of West longitude, this elevation, added to some other local causes, suffices to give it during winter, the temperature of our spring, and in that season, the heat is very seldom so great as in our summers : this will be seen by the thermometrical observations inserted in the course of this chapter. It is the residence of the captain-general ; of the intendant ; of the audien- cia, or supreme administrative and judicial tribunal ; of an archbishop ; a chapter ; a tribunal of the inquisition

(abolished by the present government), and an university ; it has somewhat of a triangular shape, and is about two thousand toises long on each of its sides. Like all other towns in the new world, its streets are drawn at right angles, and are rather wide. Being built on an unequal surface, whatever Caraccas wants in regularity, it gains in picturesque effect : many of the houses have terraced roofs, others are covered with bent tiles ; there are many that have only a ground floor ; the rest have but one story more : they are built either of brick or of earth well pounded, and covered with stucco, of an architecture sufficiently solid, elegant, and adapted to the climate. Many of them have gardens in their rear, which is the reason that this town has an extent equal to an European one that would contain an hundred thousand persons. Four beautiful streams that traverse it, contribute to its coolness and cleanliness, and give it an air of animation which is not found in towns deprived of running water. As in some towns of the Alps and

Pyrenees, each householder in Caraccas has the invaluable advantage of having in his house a pipe of running and limpid water, which does not prevent all the squares, and almost all the streets from having public fountains. In general there is much luxury and gilding in the decorations of the houses of wealthy persons, and among all, more cleanliness and comfort than in Spain. This town does not possess any public edifice remarkable for its beauty and size, with the exception of the church of Alta Gracia, built at

the expense of the people of colour in Caraccas and its vicinity."

In 1810, previous to the earthquake by which a great portion of the city was destroyed, the population exceeded forty-seven thousand souls. Owing to the circumstance of there being no seaport nearer than five leagues from the Caraccas, and the consequent difficulty of making it a commercial emporium of importance, the congress has by a recent decree fixed upon another spot to build a capital more worthy of the newly united republic; this is to be called BOLIVAR.